



Project for the reintroduction of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon in Aruba presented to Princess Beatrix

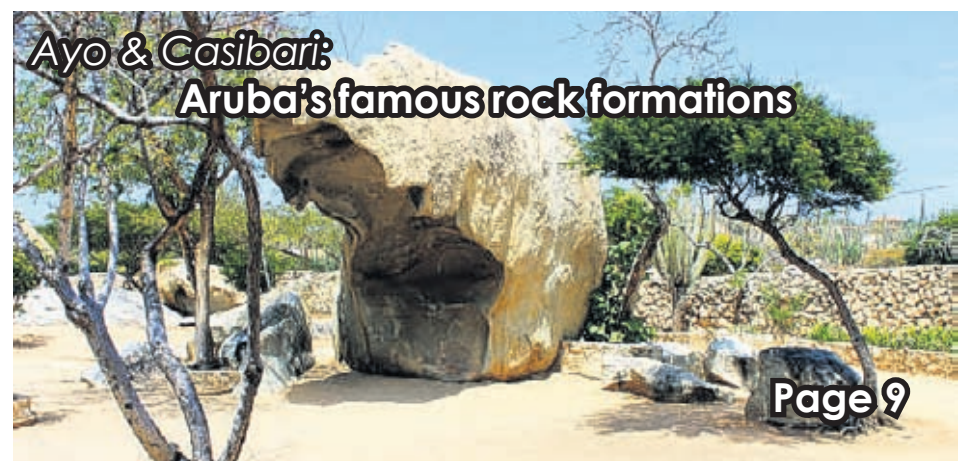


HRH Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands observes a Lora with Aruban Minister of Nature, Ursell Arends during a meeting with the Aruba National Park Foundation regarding the reintroduction project for the Yellow-shouldered Amazon in Aruba.



Local election workers have been under siege since 2020

Emergency and law enforcement agencies respond to a possible hazmat situation at the King County Elections office in Renton, Wash., Nov. 8, 2023. Associated Press



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Local election workers have been under siege since 2020

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY

Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — While workers were counting ballots for primary elections in August, the elections office in King County, Washington, received a suspicious envelope that turned out to contain trace amounts of fentanyl.

It happened again this week, and not just in Washington state, where the office was processing ballots from the general election and had to be evacuated. Election offices in at least five states were sent threatening mail, some containing the potentially deadly drug, authorities say.

Authorities were working to intercept any additional letters still in the mail system, including one bound for Atlanta's Fulton County, the largest voting jurisdiction in one of the nation's most important presidential swing states. Officials said Friday afternoon the letter sent to the Georgia office had been located.

The letters were just the latest worrisome disruption for election workers in Seattle and across the country who have been besieged by threats, harassment and intimidation since the 2020 presidential election.

"There's certainly a toll that occurs emotionally and mentally with our elections administrators, and it's devastating," said Julie Wise, the King County elections director. "But we're not going to be paused or impacted by these individuals who clearly want to break us."

Election offices have been understaffed for years, and the pandemic-related challenges before the 2020 vote and the hostility afterward driven by false claims of a stolen election have led to a wave of retirements and resignations. Those who remain are tired and worried — and yet determined to do everything they can to conduct a safe and secure election next year.

King County was one of at least four counties in Washington with election offices that were evacu-



Julie Wise, King County's elections director, poses for a photo alongside a ballot drop box, Oct. 9, 2018, at the King County Elections office in Renton, Wash.

Associated Press

ated this week after they received envelopes containing suspicious powders — including two that field-tested positive for fentanyl — while workers were processing ballots from Tuesday's election.

Authorities say suspicious letters also were sent to election offices in four other states: Georgia, Nevada, California and Oregon — with some being intercepted before they were delivered. Four of the letters sent to offices in the five states contained fentanyl, according to a memo Thursday to election officials from the FBI and U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Election officials are confronting the new reality of having the overdose-reversal drug naloxone on hand as a precaution. Fulton County has been the target of conspiracy theories since the 2020 election, and its election workers have been harassed and threatened over false claims that they were stuffing ballots to aid Democrats.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, the state's top election official and a Republican, said his office had alerted all 159 of its counties of the possible threat. In speaking about the seriousness of the threat, he noted one of his sons died of a fentanyl overdose about five years ago.

"We want to make sure

our workers in the Fulton County election office are safe," Raffensperger said. "We know how deadly this stuff is."

Fentanyl, an opioid that can be 50 times as powerful as the same amount of heroin, is driving an overdose crisis as it is pressed into pills or mixed into other drugs — though briefly touching it cannot cause an overdose and researchers have found that the risk of fatal overdose from accidental exposure is low.

Just a few months ago, election workers in Ingham County, Michigan, were trained in using naloxone out of concern that something like this week's occurrences could happen, Clerk Barb Byrum said. She is confident her team is doing everything it can to keep workers safe but knows there are no guarantees given the vitriol displayed by some voters and combustibility of false election claims.

"We shouldn't have to live in fear of opening letters, which we get thousands per week, especially during elections," Byrum said. "This flagrant attempt to interfere with democracy has gone far beyond one person. It has metastasized everywhere."

Recruiting enough people to assist with elections, including poll workers and temporary or part-time staff, already was a chal-

lenge for the nation's 10,000 voting jurisdictions before the hostility that has emerged since the 2020 election. The current environment has only made the task harder.

"A smooth Election Day happens in large part to these people coming back election after election and bringing their knowledge and training with them," said Ryan Ronco, clerk in Placer County, California. "In an era when it's getting harder and harder to find people willing to volunteer for anything, whether that's joining the Rotary club or being a Little League coach or any number of things, people who were already on the fence about serving will likely opt out rather than opt in."

Meanwhile, the exodus of some top local election officials has the potential to create a vacuum of institutional knowledge, raising concerns that inexperience could lead to mistakes that could later be twisted by conspiracy theorists.

Some politically important states are seeing significant staff turnover. In Pennsylvania, officials estimate 40 of the state's 67 county election offices have new directors or deputy directors since 2020. In Nevada, election directors in 11 of 17 counties will be overseeing their first presidential election next year, while in Arizona at least 12 of 15

counties have lost at least one top election official.

In North Carolina, where Republican lawmakers recently moved to gain more control of state and local election boards, roughly a third of 100 county election directors have left since the 2020 election.

Kim Wyman, the former secretary of state in Washington, said election workers are worn down from the harassment they have received in the past few years but are focused on ensuring an accessible and secure election.

"At best, these letters are another reminder that there are people willing to intimidate election officials and make them question whether their job is worth the risk," Wyman said. "At worst, a bad actor is going to injure or kill somebody for just doing their job."

Nationally, the harassment of election workers has drawn the attention of Congress, state lawmakers and law enforcement. Lawmakers in several states have increased criminal penalties for those who threaten election workers, and the Justice Department has formed a task force that has charged more than a dozen people across the country.

Former election officials say it's imperative that people are arrested and prosecuted for threats.

"Getting to the bottom of what happened and holding those accountable who threaten or endanger the lives of our election officials is critical to helping prevent and mitigate threats moving forward," said Liz Howard, a former Virginia election official now at the Brennan Center for Justice's elections and government program.

Wise, who has worked in elections for 23 years, said she and others who work in the King County election offices are resilient and dedicated to the nonpartisan work of running elections. She emphasized that the threatening letters have only stiffened their resolve. "It lit a fire underneath us," she said. □

New Speaker Mike Johnson grasps for a funding plan with a government shutdown rapidly approaching

By **STEPHEN GROVES** and **KEVIN FREKING**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With just a week left to avert a government shutdown, new House Speaker Mike Johnson is facing his first big test as he tries to win House Republican support for a short-term funding plan — a task that looks increasingly difficult amid stubborn divisions in the party over federal spending.

Federal agencies are making plans for a shutdown that would shutter government services and halt paychecks for millions of federal workers and military troops.

It's a disruption that Johnson — just two weeks into his job running the House — has said he wants to avoid. Yet House lawmakers left Washington for the weekend without a plan in hand after several setbacks. Johnson is still sounding out support among Republicans about what to do and is expected to unveil funding legislation over the weekend, according to Republicans granted anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

The shrinking calendar gives Johnson, a Louisiana Republican who has vaulted from the lower ranks of Republican leadership to the speaker's office, a narrow window to corral an unpredictable GOP con-



Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., talks with reporters ahead of the debate and vote on supplemental aid to Israel, at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023.

Associated Press

ference.

"We're running up against the clock on Nov. 17, and we're obviously aware of that," Johnson said this week, referring to the date that government funding expires. "But we are going to get the job done."

Hardline conservatives, usually loathe to support temporary spending measures of any sort, had indicated they would give Johnson some leeway to pass legislation, known as a continuing resolution, to give Congress more time to negotiate a long-term agreement. Congress passed a 47-day continuing resolution in October,

but the fallout was severe. Kevin McCarthy was booted from the speakership days later, and the House was effectively paralyzed for most of the month while Republicans tried to elect a replacement.

Republicans eventually were unanimous in electing Johnson speaker, but his elevation has hardly eased the dynamic that led to McCarthy's removal — a conference torn on policy as well as how much to spend on federal programs. This week, Republicans had to pull two spending bills from the floor — one to fund transportation and housing programs

and the other to fund the Treasury Department, Small Business Administration and other agencies — because they didn't have the votes in their own party to push them through the House.

"I thought we were going to show the speaker a little bit of grace," said a frustrated Rep. Troy Nehls, R-Texas, as he exited the Capitol Thursday after the last votes of the week. "I think it's looking like we're still confused and we are not united."

Johnson has turned to House Republicans for ideas on how to win support for a continuing resolution. He has floated the obscure idea of a "laddered"

approach that would fund some parts of the government until early December and other federal departments until mid-January. He has also raised the idea of a funding package that would last into January.

Meanwhile, lawmakers are still looking for a way to negotiate final passage of aid for Israel in its war with Hamas, and Johnson has also proposed the formation of a new federal commission focused on slowing increases in the national debt that threaten the government's ability in future years to finance the military and major entitlement programs relied on by seniors and the disabled.

Democrats have made it clear they will not support any funding packages that include policy wins for conservatives. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, who the Democratic leader in the House, said they would not "pay a single, right-wing ransom demand" as part of a funding resolution. Democratic lawmakers are also eager to play up the House Republican divisions and to pin any blame for a shutdown squarely on the new speaker and his GOP colleagues.

"They are a divided, divisive, dysfunctional majority," said Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md. "They can't get their business done, to the detriment of Americans." □

The Air Force's new nuclear stealth bomber, the B-21 Raider, has taken its first test flight

By **TARA COPP**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The B-21 Raider took its first test flight on Friday, moving the futuristic warplane closer to becoming the nation's next nuclear weapons stealth bomber.

The Raider flew in Palmdale, California, where it has been under testing and development by Northrop Grumman.

The Air Force is planning to build 100 of the warplanes,

which have a flying wing shape much like their predecessor the B-2 Spirit but will incorporate advanced materials, propulsion and stealth technology to make them more survivable in a future conflict. The plane is planned to be produced in variants with and without pilots.

"The B-21 Raider is in flight testing," Air Force spokeswoman Ann Stefanek said. Such testing is a critical step in the campaign to

provide "survivable, long-range, penetrating strike capabilities to deter aggression and strategic attacks against the United States, allies, and partners," Stefanek said.

The B-21 Raider is the first new American bomber aircraft in more than 30 years, and almost every aspect of the program is classified. Both Northrop Grumman and the Air Force have tried to protect the program's de-



The B-21 Raider stealth bomber is unveiled at Northrop Grumman, Dec. 2, 2022, in Palmdale, Calif.

Associated Press

tails to prevent China from gaining access to the weapon's technology and building a similar ver-

sion, as it has with other U.S. advanced weapons systems like the F-35 joint strike fighter. □

FBI seized phones, iPad from New York Mayor Eric Adams in escalation of fundraising investigation

NEW YORK (AP) — FBI agents seized phones and an iPad from New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week as part of an investigation into his campaign fundraising, his attorney confirmed Friday. The seizures happened after the mayor attended a public event Monday night, according to a statement from the mayor's attorney, Boyd Johnson.

"On Monday night, the FBI approached the mayor after an event. The Mayor immediately complied with the FBI's request and provided them with electronic devices," the statement said. "The mayor has not been accused of any wrongdoing and continues to cooperate with the investigation."

The seizure of the devices, first reported by The New York Times, came days after federal agents searched the Brooklyn home of Adams' top campaign fundraiser, Brianna Suggs. That search prompted the mayor to cancel a planned trip to meet with White House officials in Washington and instead return to New York. Adams, a Democrat, said nothing publicly about his phones being seized



New York City Mayor Eric Adams speaks in New York's Times Square during a news conference on Dec. 30, 2022.

Associated Press

when he met with reporters on Wednesday and said he wasn't aware of any wrongdoing by members of his campaign team. He expressed confidence that everyone working for him was following the law. In a statement Friday, Johnson said Adams was committed to cooperating with the probe. He also implied that wrongdoing had, in fact, been uncovered, but didn't say what.

"After learning of the federal investigation, it was discovered that an individual had recently acted improperly. In the spirit of transparency and cooperation, this behavior was immediately and proactively reported to investigators," he said, offering no further details.

A spokesperson for the U.S. attorney in Manhattan declined to comment.

"As a former member of

law enforcement, I expect all members of my staff to follow the law and fully cooperate with any sort of investigation—and I will continue to do exactly that. I have nothing to hide," Adams, a former police captain, said in a statement.

The focus of the investigation hasn't been publicly disclosed by prosecutors, but a search warrant obtained by the New York Times indicated authorities

are examining whether the Adams campaign conspired with the Turkish government to receive donations from foreign sources, funneled through straw donors. Photos show Adams spoke at an autism awareness event at New York University on Monday evening. The following day, his spokesperson announced that Adams would not travel to Puerto Rico for an annual conference that is widely attended by New York's political players.

At his news conference Wednesday, Adams told reporters that his absence was the result of New York's fiscal belt-tightening. Flyers show that Adams was previously scheduled to receive a humanitarian award at the conference.

The Democrat also reiterated earlier statements that he had no personal knowledge of any improper fundraising, and didn't believe he had anything to personally fear from the investigation. At the time, the mayor's chief City Hall lawyer had confirmed that the administration was communicating with federal prosecutors, but declined to discuss what that entailed. □



Chickens walk in a fenced pasture at an organic farm in Iowa on Oct. 21, 2015.

Associated Press

By JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

An additional 1.2 million chickens will be slaughtered to prevent the spread of the bird flu after the virus was confirmed on an Iowa egg farm in the second massive case this week.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship announced the latest bird flu infection at a farm in Taylor County Friday, and Iowa's governor immediately declared a disaster there to make sure the state has the resources to respond quickly.

1.2 million chickens will be slaughtered at an Iowa farm where bird flu was found

The Iowa case is just the latest one in the outbreak that began early last year and has prompted officials to kill a total of nearly 63 million birds. Earlier this week, 1 million chickens were killed on a Minnesota egg farm. But the vast majority of the cases, or nearly 58 million birds, occurred last year. Anytime a case of bird flu is found the entire flock is killed to help keep the highly contagious virus from spreading to another farm.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has been finding fewer wild birds carrying the virus this year, which suggests that some ducks and geese may be developing immu-

nity. Farmers also have been working hard to keep the virus off their farms, and the government has been trying to respond quickly anytime bird flu is found. Iowa remains the hardest hit state in the nation, with more than 17 million birds killed there since the outbreak began. The state is the nation's leading egg producer and egg farms tend to have the most birds. In one case last year, 5 million chickens were slaughtered on a single Iowa egg farm. Nebraska comes next with more than 6.7 million birds killed, followed by Colorado's 6.26 million and Minnesota's 5.6 million.

Most of the recent cases

this fall have been found in Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa along one of the major migratory paths ducks and geese follow as they fly south for winter. The virus is spread easily by the droppings of those wild birds that can be tracked onto farms, and there has been an expected uptick in cases since the fall migration began.

Poultry and egg farmers try to keep the virus from reaching their farms by requiring workers to shower and change clothes before they enter barns.

Trucks are also sanitized before they enter the farm, and separate sets of tools are kept for each barn. □

U.S. and India reaffirm security ties as their top diplomats and defense officials hold talks

By **ASHOK SHARMA**

Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India and the U.S. underlined their commitment to boosting security ties Friday as their top diplomats and defense chiefs met to discuss regional security, China and the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin met with their Indian counterparts in New Delhi as part of an Asian trip aimed at showing unity over Russia's war in Ukraine and preventing differences on the Israel-Hamas war from deepening.

Blinken said the U.S. and India were continuing to "deepen our collaboration on everything from emerging technologies to defense to people-to-people ties" and align diplomacy for "an Indo-Pacific region that's free, that's open, that's prosperous, that's resilient."

He said the two sides discussed the crisis in the Middle East and "we appreciate the fact that from day one India has strongly condemned the attacks



of Oct. 7. And as our joint statement makes clear, India and the United States stand with Israel against terrorists."

Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaisankar said the situation in the Middle East was a big concern. While India has condemned the Hamas attack on Israel, it balances its position by calling for talks on "a sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine living within se-

cure and recognized borders, side-by-side at peace with Israel."

Blinken met with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "reaffirmed their shared vision for close partnership in the Indo-Pacific," said U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller. "They emphasized working together to address ongoing crises such as Russia's war against Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East," Miller said.

Vinay Mohan Kwatra, India's top bureaucrat in the foreign ministry, said India's tense ties with China also were discussed at the official-level talks, but declined to give details. India's relationship with China has deteriorated since 2020, when Indian and Chinese troops clashed along their disputed border in the Himalayan Ladakh region, leaving 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead. A standoff involving thou-

sands of soldiers in the eastern Ladakh region continues, despite several rounds of military and diplomatic talks.

Blinken said he also discussed with the Indian side a diplomatic dispute that erupted when Canada alleged that India was involved in the assassination of a Sikh separatist in Canada.

Blinken said that the U.S. wants the two sides to resolve their differences in a cooperative way and urged India to "work with Canada on its investigation."

The dispute started when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said there were "credible allegations" of Indian involvement in the killing of Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar in suburban Vancouver in western Canada. India rejected the accusation. India and the U.S. have held so-called two-plus-two talks between India's external affairs and defense ministers and the U.S. secretaries of state and defense since 2018 to discuss issues of concern and strengthen bilateral ties. □

Iranian-born Norwegian man is charged over deadly Oslo Pride attack in 2022

By **JAN M. OLSEN**

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark

(AP) — A Norwegian citizen originally from Iran was charged Friday with aggravated terrorism for the 2022 deadly shooting ahead of an LGBTQ festival in the nightlife district of the capital, Oslo. Two people were killed and nine seriously wounded in the shooting at three locations, chiefly outside the London Pub, a popular gay bar, on June 25, 2022.

Prosecutor Sturla Henriksbø said that Zaniar Matapour, 44, fired 10 rounds with a machine gun and eight shots with a handgun into a crowd at a street corner in the nightlife district where

there were a total of 560 people. Before that, he took "an oath of allegiance to the Islamic State group."

"The attack caused great fear," Henriksbø said. One of the victims was hit by four bullets, while the other one was killed by a single shot. Matapour was arrested shortly after by bystanders and has since been held on suspicion of being the shooter. Following the attack, a Pride parade was canceled, with the police saying they could not guarantee security. Matapour has refused to speak to investigators.

Another prosecutor, Aud Kinsarvik Gravås, said four other suspects were linked to the shooting but they have not

been charged as the investigation is still ongoing. Two of them are outside Norway. One of those suspected in the case is a leading Norwegian radical Islamist who is in hiding in Pakistan. The whereabouts of the other one was not known.

"We believe that it will take some time before they return to Norway," she said. "It is important to stress that even if the charge only applies to Matapour, it does not mean that the suspicion against the others in the case has weakened."

The trial against Matapour who reportedly arrived in Norway with his family from a Kurdish part of Iran in the 1990s, is scheduled to start in March and last for two



People comfort each other at the scene of a shooting in central Oslo, Norway, on June 25, 2022.

Associated Press

months. If found guilty, he faces 30 years in prison. The shooting shocked Norway, which has a relatively low crime rate but has experienced a series of so-called lone wolf attacks in recent decades, including one of the worst mass shootings in Europe. In 2011, a right-wing

extremist killed 69 people on the island of Utoya after setting off a bomb in Oslo that left eight dead.

In 2019, another right-wing extremist killed his stepsister and then opened fire in a mosque but was overpowered before anyone there was injured. □

Stark U.N. report on devastation to Palestinian economy shows GDP fell 4% after a month of war

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A U.N. report paints a stark picture of the devastation of the collapse of the Palestinian economy after a month of war and Israel's near-total siege of Gaza. The gross domestic product shrank 4% in the West Bank and Gaza in the war's first month, sending over 400,000 people into poverty — an economic impact unseen in the conflicts Syria and Ukraine, or any previous Israel-Hamas war, the U.N. said.

Hamas militants, who rule Gaza, launched a surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7 killing over 1,400 people, mainly civilians, and kidnapping about 240 others. More than two-thirds of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes since Israel launched weeks of intense airstrikes followed by an ongoing ground operation, vowing to obliterate Hamas. The Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza said Thursday that 10,818 Palestinians, including more than 4,400 children, have been killed so far.

The rapid assessment of economic consequences of the Gaza war released



A Palestinian child walks with a bicycle by the rubble of a building after it was hit by an Israeli airstrike, in Gaza City, Sunday, Oct. 8, 2023.

Thursday by the U.N. Development Program and the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia was the first U.N. report showing the devastating impact of the conflict especially on the Palestinians. If the war continues for a second month, the U.N. projects that the Palestinian GDP, which was \$20.4 billion before the war began, will drop by 8.4% — a loss of \$1.7 billion. And

if the conflict lasts a third month, Palestinian GDP will drop by 12%, with losses of \$2.5 billion and more than 660,000 people pushed into poverty, it projects.

U.N. Development Program Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah Al Dardari told a news conference that a 12% GDP loss at the end of the year would be "massive and unprecedented." By comparison, he said, the Syrian economy used

to lose 1% of its GDP per month at the height of its conflict, and it took Ukraine a year and a half of fighting to lose 30% of its GDP, an average of about 1.6% a month.

At the beginning of 2023, the Palestinian territories — the West Bank and Gaza — were considered a lower middle-income economy with a poverty level of \$6 per day per person, Economic Commission Execu-

tive Secretary Rola Dashti said. In January, Gaza was already grappling with high unemployment of about 46%, three-and-a-half times higher than the West Bank's 13%, the report said.

But just weeks of war has destroyed hundreds of thousands of jobs.

"As the war hits the one-month mark, 61% of employment in Gaza, equivalent to 182,000 jobs, is estimated to have been lost," it said. "Around 24% of employment in the West Bank has also been lost, equivalent to 208,000 jobs."

Al Dardari pointed to massive disruption to the economy in the West Bank, which is responsible for 82% of Palestinian GDP, explaining that this is supposed to be the season for olive and citrus farmers to collect their products but they can't because of the war. And "the tourism season is practically gone — and agriculture and tourism represent 40% of the GDP in the West Bank," he said.

In addition, Al Dardari said, there are major disruptions to trade, to the transfer of money from Israel to the Palestinian Authority, which controls the West Bank, and no investment. □

Associated Press



A teacher helps a student write alphabets in a first-grade class at the Shangri-La Key Boarding School during a media-organized tour in Dabpa county, Kardze Prefecture, Sichuan province, China on Sept. 5, 2023.

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A government official from China's Tibetan region on Friday rejected allegations of forced assimilation and curbs on religious freedom, while stressing that Tibetan

Buddhism should adapt to the Chinese context. Xu Zhitao, vice chairman of the Tibet region government, defended a boarding school system that overseas activists have said

China denies accusations of forced assimilation and curbs on religious freedom in Tibet

takes children away from their parents and their Tibetan communities. He said China has opened the schools to improve education for children from remote areas. "The claim that Tibetan children are forced to go to boarding schools is deliberate smearing with an ulterior motive," he said at a news conference to release an official report on the Communist Party's policies in Tibet.

The report extolled progress in economic development, social stability and environmental protection under Communist Party rule. China has built highways and high-speed rail-

ways through the mountainous region and promoted tourism as a way to boost incomes. But activists and some Western governments have accused China of human rights violations and suppressing Tibetan culture in its effort to quash any movement toward secession or independence. The boarding schools have come under criticism this year from U.N. human rights experts and the U.S. government, which said it would put visa restrictions on officials involved in the schools.

China also has boarding schools in other parts of the country but they appear

more widespread in Tibet. Xu said they are needed to serve sparsely populated and remote rural areas.

"If the schools are too spread out, it would be difficult to have enough teachers or to provide quality teaching," he said. "So it's highly necessary to have a combination of boarding schools and day schools to ensure high quality teaching and the equal rights of children." He said the government manages religious affairs that are related to the interests of the state and the public but does not interfere in the internal affairs of religious groups. □

Project for the reintroduction of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon in Aruba presented to Princess Beatrix



ORANJESTAD – Yesterday was the final day of princess Beatrix of the Netherlands to Aruba, as she was invited by DCNA, a nature conservation organization of which she is a patron. As part of her visit, the princess was invited to receive information on a successful project for the reintroduction of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*), known locally as Lora, back in Aruba.

Yesterday morning, minister of Nature, Ursell Arends was honored to accompany Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands to the Aruba National Park Foundation (FPNA) Project and learn more about the reintroduction of the Lora in Aruba. Lora is an endemic bird, but since many years already it cannot be found in our nature. The project to reintroduce the Lora will ensure that once again we can enjoy these beautiful

and charismatic birds in Aruba's nature.

This project is an example of collaboration between Aruba and Bonaire, where exchange of knowledge and efforts between all those involved is resulting in a successful project. Working together, we can amplify our achievements to benefit our communities and our natural heritage.

FPNA, in charge of an education and awareness campaign for the community of Aruba regarding the Lora, is playing a vital role. Their job is to ensure that every single person understands the importance of their role in the protection of our native bird. Each citizen can contribute to maintaining our natural heritage, and all the treasures that our nature offers.

Congratulations to the team of the Arikok National



Park Foundation for their distinguished efforts and dedication to make this project a reality. Their work represents an important step in recovering our natural heritage and it shows

their commitment to our flora and fauna. Soon, Aruba will be able to celebrate this immense achievement for our country! □



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National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a

majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok

National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these his-



torical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In Feb-

ruary 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



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Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill



(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one

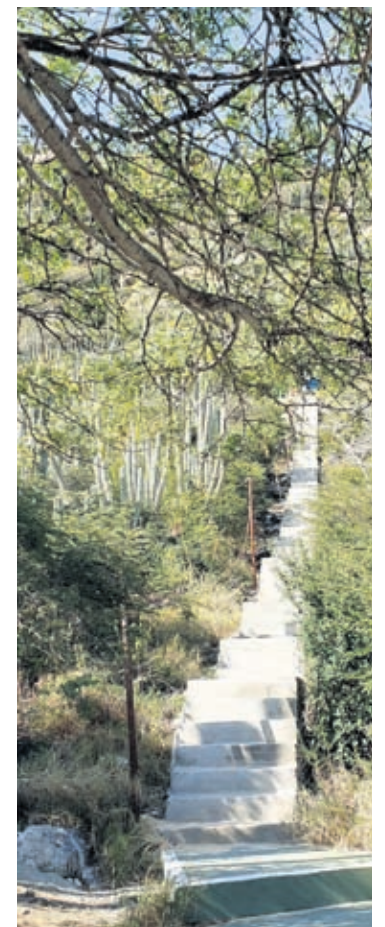
of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on

the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still be

a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see. The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □



Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your "off-road" trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.

Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding "mondi"*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it



is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that

lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great place to get refreshments and snack before continuing your off-road adventure!

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! □

History of fishing in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Fishing has been a family tradition for ages in Aruba. Our ancestors used to fish for a living. Even though nowadays you don't see them often we still have some passionate fishermen on the island that go out every day in search for fish to feed their families and serve our local market. One of these fishermen is Gregory Wernet.

The so-called Continental Bank between Aruba and the opposite coast reaches a depth of about 650 feet. The sea is very rich in fish here. Since the time of the indigenous native people fish and other sea creatures such as turtles, octopus squids, conch and many type of crustaceans have formed a means of subsistence for the native Aruban inhabitants. Especially along the west coast of the island where the fishing grounds are settlements of fishermen. Until the arrival of the oil -industry Aruban fishermen could supply Aruba's wants.

As a source of income, however, fishing did not amount too much. In the beginning of the 1900's approximately 160 people earn their living in this branch of this industry. Rancho, which stands for a shed, nowadays east Oranjestad, was the head quarter and remains the fishermen's settlement. Sa-



vaneta, Noord, Santa Cruz all had their fishermen's villages. At a rough estimate there were about a hundred small fishing boats during that time.

The Arubans were mainly engaged in coastal fishing, using rowing-boats or small sailing-boats, and lines or dragnets and canisters in shallow water. When fishing with deep-sea lines just over the bottom of the sea the boat is kept in place by means of a piece of rock serving as an anchor. The two most important species of fish by far caught in this manner are the pargo or red snappers and a variety of groupers like the mero, jeanpao and the wowo di

boyo.

Cruising off the coast the Aruban fisherman patiently waits for a fish willing to snap at the bait on the drag-line, in nets and traps. Veritable giants are sometimes caught. Barracudas weigh from 9 to 44 pounds and measure from 3 to almost 7 feet. The king-fish has a weight from 22 to 44 pounds; the moclat may tip the scales at 155, whilst garfish, having a length of nine feet, weigh over 132 pounds.

Most fish caught is used for their own consumption, to feed their families and some are being sold in the market to local restaurants.

Fisherman Gregory Wernet

Gregory Wernet is a well-known fisherman from Santa Cruz. His father taught him fishing when he was a small child. Gregory has two sons, Jordan and Jordanny, which he taught fishing too, when they were only 3 years old and he takes them fishing with him. Fishing has been a family tradition for quite a long time and even his grandson Willvion of 7 years old is following his grandfather steps. This is the sixth generation of fishermen in their family.

They go deep sea fishing. There they catch red snapper, grouper and amberjack. They usually fish for

15 hours a day, but now due to the covid-19 measurements they go fishing from 5 in the morning until 8 o'clock at night or even sometimes from 8 at night till 5 in the morning. The day before they prepare all their fishing tools such as the Lines, lures, spears, and load their boat with fishing reels, batteries, fill the gasoline tank, lights and some food and beverages. For bait he uses sardines, squid and the small fish known in Aruba as piskechi. The have two boats they use for fishing. 'Virgen del Valle' which is parked at the pier by the Seaport and 'Padrot' which they have at home.

The fish they catch they take home to their families and they also sell it to their clients. Gregory is proud to be a fisherman. It is a honest and humble job but with it he is able to feed his family even during hard times. It is a very dangerous job and you have to spend many hours on the sea, waiting patiently and risking your life while fighting a big fish and big waves but the adrenaline it brings with it but also just sitting there listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the marvelous view that nature has to offer is all worth it.

Source: Etnia Nativa



Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The en-

emies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is

simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become



part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and

protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/>



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 40 Flower girl, often fliers
 - 41 Hit bottom?
 - 42 Boston entree

- DOWN**
- 1 Some embroidery
 - 2 Experience over
 - 3 Egg dish
 - 4 Flag waver
 - 5 Mares' mates
 - 6 Piper of myth
 - 7 Greek vowel
 - 8 Hams' needs
 - 9 Coterie

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Yesterday's answer

- 10 Baker's need
- 16 Big Apple team
- 20 Long-necked onions
- 21 Loft contents
- 24 Writer Beattie
- 25 Botch
- 26 Cry of discovery
- 27 Station worker
- 28 Fermi of physics
- 29 Made independent
- 30 Glowing embers
- 34 Sweeping tale
- 36 Operated
- 37 Reproachful sound

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11-11

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-11

CRYPTOQUOTE

OV UZZDPY UODP VBP TZXUY
TCR SZQPXPY OM C SZLLUPX
SXIRV ZA LXZTM RIHCX CMY
S O M M C E Z M . — R C X C B
CYYORZM CUUPM

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I HAD MY DEEPEST FEELINGS SO WELL I FORGOT WHERE I PLACED THEM. — AMY TAN, "SAVING FISH FROM DROWNING"

Millennial Money: Black Friday shopping could look different this year, experts say



Shoppers walk up and down the stairs in a Nike store on Black Friday, Nov. 25, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

By LAUREN SCHWAHN
of NerdWallet

Retailers thrive on tantalizing shoppers ahead of the post-Thanksgiving event, keeping them guessing about how exactly the experience will unfold. But economic conditions, past sales and other factors can provide clues about what's to come.

Here's what marketing, retail and supply chain experts expect for Black Friday 2023.

SHOPPERS AND RETAILERS MAY SCALE BACK

"A lot of macroeconomic indicators are pointing to a big slowdown in spending," says Jeff Galak, associate professor of marketing at Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business. Signs include record-high consumer credit card debt — balances reached over \$1 trillion in the second quarter of 2023, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York — a reduced personal savings rate and the increased cost of goods due to inflation, Galak says.

Consumers are feeling the pinch. Some 2023 shoppers say they plan to purchase

gifts for fewer people this holiday season (31%) or spend less on gifts per person (30%) compared with past years, according to the 2023 Holiday Shopping Report from NerdWallet. Retailers are facing pressures too, which likely means smaller markdowns for Black Friday, Galak says. "Their supply chains are also pushing prices higher, so it's not like there's an infinite amount that they can discount whatever the latest television is. There's still a floor, and that floor is going up."

SALES WILL PERSIST

While Black Friday prices probably won't reach all-time lows, shoppers will find deals galore. In fact, many retailers have been in holiday sales mode since the beginning of October. Among the early entries: Walmart Deals Holiday Kickoff, which ran from Oct. 9 through 12, and Amazon's Prime Big Deal Days on Oct. 10 and 11.

These events preview the products and discounts shoppers might find during Black Friday sales. For example, Amazon and Walmart discounted Apple

Airpods Pro (2nd generation) from \$249 to \$189, the lowest price so far this year. Retailers bring out some of their best sales when they know customers are most prone to shop. Black Friday remained the most popular shopping day of Thanksgiving weekend in 2022, notes Katherine Cullen, vice president of industry and consumer insights at the National Retail Federation. "It does seem that even with the early start to the shopping season, consumers do still very much look to Thanksgiving weekend for a sense of tradition," she says.

Expect additional chances to save money as holiday deals continue past November. But if you spot a price that suits your budget, it may be worth buying early.

DELIVERIES COULD FACE INTERRUPTIONS

Lingering effects from a weeklong autoworkers strike could create shipping delays for holiday shoppers and retailers, as could a federal government shutdown.

A strike involving thousands of United Auto Workers could cause delivery issues if trucks can't get parts needed for repairs, says Rob Handfield, a professor of supply chain management at North Carolina State University's Poole College of Management.

The U.S. government narrowly escaped a shutdown in September, but funding lasts only through Nov. 17 — one week before Black Friday. "We rely on a lot of government services to make supply chains work: Customs and Border (Protection), a lot of the regulatory agencies, the FAA," Handfield says. "If there's a government shutdown and some of those agencies are impacted, it's going to impact import/exports, it could impact our rail system, it could impact our transportation system." Still, experts don't expect the same level of supply chain disruptions as in the past couple of years. □

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24/7

Syphilis cases in U.S. newborns skyrocketed in 2022. Health officials suggest more testing

By MIKE STOBBE and
KENYA HUNTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Alarmed by yet another jump in syphilis cases in newborns, U.S. health officials are calling for stepped-up prevention measures, including encouraging millions of women of childbearing age and their partners to get tested for the sexually transmitted disease.

More than 3,700 babies were born with congenital syphilis in 2022 — 10 times more than a decade ago and a 32% increase from 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. Syphilis caused 282 stillbirth and infant deaths, nearly 16 times more than the 2012 deaths. The 2022 count was the most in more than 30 years, CDC officials said, and in more than half of the congenital syphilis cases, the mothers tested positive during pregnancy but did not get properly treated. The rise in congenital syphilis comes despite repeated warnings by public health agencies and it's tied to the surge in primary and secondary cases of syphilis in adults, CDC officials said. It's also been increasingly difficult for medical providers to get benzathine penicillin injections — the main medical weapon against congenital syphilis — because of supply shortages.

"It is clear that something is not working here, that something has to change," the CDC's Dr. Laura Bachmann said. "That's why we're calling for exceptional measures to address this heartbreaking epidemic." The federal agency wants medical providers to start syphilis treatment when a pregnant woman first tests positive, rather than waiting for confirmatory testing, and to expand access to transportation so the women can get treatment. The CDC also called for rapid tests to be made available beyond doctors' offices and STD clinics to places like emergency rooms, needle-exchange

programs and prisons and jails.

Federal officials again advised sexually active women of childbearing age and their partners to get tested for syphilis test at least once if they live in a county with high rates. According to a new CDC map and definition, 70% of U.S. adults live in a county with high rates. That's likely tens of millions of people, according to an Associated Press estimate based on federal data.

The CDC's recommendations are just that; there is no new federal money going out to state and local health departments to bolster testing or access. Some state health departments have already said they're stretched thin when it comes to treatment and prevention, though Illinois announced last week it was starting a phone line for health care providers to help with record searching, consultation and assistance with mandatory reporting.

New infections plummeted in the U.S. starting in the 1940s when antibiotics became widely available and fell to their lowest mark in the late 1990s. By 2002, cases began rising again, with men who have sex with other men being disproportionately affected, though the STD is spreading among several demo-

graphics.

In congenital syphilis, moms pass the disease on to their babies, potentially leading to death of the child or health problems for the child like deafness, blindness, and malformed bones. Case rates have been rising across racial and ethnic groups.

Dr. Mike Saag, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said syphilis can be "a silent infection" in women because it's tricky to diagnose without a blood test — not everyone gets painless sores, wart-like lesions or other visible symptoms.

The CDC has long recommended that all pregnant women should be tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit, but poor access to prenatal care — largely in rural areas of the U.S. — can make that difficult. Nearly 40% of last year's congenital syphilis cases involved mothers who didn't have prenatal care, the CDC said.

If syphilis is diagnosed early in a pregnancy, the threat of passing it to the baby can be removed by a single penicillin shot. But experts say the later you get into pregnancy, the more likely you'll need multiple shots, and they have to be completed at least 30 days before delivery.

"I have had patients who have been on (a three-shot) regimen who then miss a shot," said Dr. Nina Ragunathan, an OB/GYN at the Delta Health Center in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. "So they are trying to get their shots, but if they don't get the three in a row, because of transportation issues, because of job issues, child care issues, any number of reasons that prevent them from coming back, they don't complete their treatment."

Plus, the shortage of shots makes the task of getting syphilis numbers down difficult, health officials across the U.S. told the AP. Patients who are not pregnant can use the antibiotic doxycycline to treat syphilis, but health officials are concerned that the 14- to 28-day timeline of treatment is difficult to complete, leaving infected people uncured. □



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| Police Tipline | 11141 |
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| Red Cross | 582 2219 |

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| Prof. Taxi | 588 0035 |
| Taxi D.T.S. | 587 2300 |
| Taxi Serv. Aruba | 583 3232 |
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| Avianca | 588 0059 |
| Jet Blue | 588 2244 |
| Surinam | 582 7896 |

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Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh banned from final 3 regular-season games

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**

**AP College Football Writer
STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP)**

— The Big Ten Conference banned Jim Harbaugh from coaching at Michigan's three remaining regular-season games on Friday, defying a warning from the second-ranked Wolverines in an extraordinary confrontation over a sign-stealing scheme that has rocked college football.

Harbaugh was disciplined by the conference less than 24 hours before kickoff at No. 9 Penn State in the Wolverines' toughest matchup of the season so far. Michigan (9-0) has a shot to win a third straight Big Ten title and the school's first national championship since 1997.

Michigan's plane landed in Pennsylvania shortly before the announcement. It issued a statement ridiculing the decision.

"Like all members of the Big Ten Conference, we are entitled to a fair, deliberate, and thoughtful process to determine the full set of facts before a judgment is rendered," the school said. "Today's action by Commissioner Tony Petitti disregards the conference's own handbook, violates basic tenets of due process, and sets an untenable precedent of assessing penalties before an investigation has been



Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh watches against Purdue in the first half of an NCAA college football game in Ann Arbor, Mich., Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023.

Associated Press

completed."

Harbaugh has denied any knowledge of an improper scouting scheme in his program. Michigan warned earlier this week that it was prepared to take possible legal action if the conference punished the program before a full investigation; the NCAA and the Big Ten are both looking into the claims.

"To ensure fairness in the process, we intend to seek a court order, together with Coach Harbaugh, preventing this disciplinary action from taking effect," Michigan said.

Getting a court order could

prove difficult before Saturday's game; Friday is the recognized federal holiday for Veteran's Day and courts were closed. Michigan accused the Big Ten of trying to "thwart" its plan to seek immediate help from a judge.

Such a fight between a conference and one of its most storied members is unheard of. The dispute began three weeks ago and the allegations leaked day by day, with it becoming clear the Wolverines do not want their undefeated season derailed by an unfinished investigation of activities it says Harbaugh

knew nothing about and are not unheard of across college football.

The Big Ten said the school had violated its sportsmanship policy by conducting "an impermissible, in-person scouting operation over multiple years" that resulted in "an unfair competitive advantage that compromised the integrity of competition." As a result, the Big Ten said Michigan must play without Harbaugh against the Nittany Lions (8-1) this weekend, next week at Maryland and in the annual showdown game against rival and No. 3 Ohio State two weeks from now.

While Harbaugh is allowed at practices and other activities, he cannot be "present at the game venue."

The league also sent a 13-page letter to Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel to back up its decision.

"(A) university football staff member engaged in an organized, extensive, years-long in-person advance scouting scheme that was impermissible. ... Such misconduct inherently compromises the integrity of competition," the letter said, before saying the school's response did not deny the scheme occurred. "Instead, it offers only procedural and technical arguments designed to delay accountability."

Michigan says it is cooperating with the NCAA, which does not outlaw sign-stealing, but has rules against in-person scouting of opponents and using electronic equipment to steal signs. The allegations against Michigan suggest a far more robust approach to gathering signs.

The low-level staffer at the center of the investigation, Connor Stalions, resigned last week. Through his attorney, Stalions said that, to his knowledge, none of the Michigan coaches told anyone to break rules or were aware of improper conduct when it came to advance scouting. □

Naomi Osaka set to make her tennis return at the Brisbane International



Naomi Osaka of Japan smiles during her first round match against Camila Osorio of Colombia at the Australian Open tennis championships, Jan. 17, 2022, in Melbourne, Australia

Associated Press

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — Four-time Grand Slam singles champion Naomi Osaka will make her comeback to tennis at the Brisbane International warm-up tournament ahead of the Australian Open.

Tournament officials on Friday confirmed Osaka will contest the Dec. 31-Jan. 7 event to start her 2024 season.

A two-time Australian and U.S. Open winner, Osaka was a surprise withdrawal from last year's Australian Open before later revealing she was pregnant.

The former tennis No. 1 announced the birth of her daughter Shai in July. "I am really excited about getting back out on court and competing. I always love starting my season in Brisbane and can't wait to return," Osaka said in a statement. It "will set me up for a brilliant comeback this summer." In a later social media post Osaka shared a link to the tournament announcement.

Osaka was born in Japan and moved to the United States with her parents when she was 3. She hasn't competed on tour since an event in Tokyo in September 2022, shortly after she lost in the first round of the U.S. Open.

Australian Open officials announced last month that Osaka would be in the field for the year's first major starting Jan. 14. □

Bill Belichick should get another opportunity if he wants to keep coaching after Patriots

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Bill Belichick has won six Super Bowls as a head coach and more games than everyone except Don Shula. That won't save his job in New England if the Patriots keep losing.

Belichick's future is a hot topic as the Patriots (2-7) prepare to play the Indianapolis Colts (4-5) in Frankfurt, Germany, on Sunday. There even was speculation this week that Belichick could be fired if New England loses to Indianapolis. Belichick presided over an unprecedented, two-decade run of excellence, but the Patriots have steadily declined since Tom Brady departed after the 2019 season. New England's dismal start this year is the franchise's worst since Belichick's first season with the team in 2000.

Since Brady left, the Patriots are 27-33, including a playoff loss. In 24 seasons as a head coach with New England and five previously with Cleveland, Belichick is 82-97 in games Brady hasn't started.

Belichick will one day be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, but it has become obvious that Brady was the reason for New England's success.

Patriots owner Robert Kraft avoided talking to reporters at the NFL meetings last month and hasn't commented on Belichick's status this season. However, he made it clear during the league's spring meetings that he expected more from the team in 2023.

"I think Bill is exceptional at what he does," Kraft said in March. "I've given him the freedom to make the choices and do the things that need to be done. His football intellect and knowledge is unparalleled from what I've seen. But in the end, this is a business. You either execute and win or you don't. That's where we're at. We're in a transition phase. I think we've made some moves this year that personally I'm comfortable with. And I still believe in Bill." Kraft also stressed the importance of making the playoffs.

"We're about winning and doing whatever we can to win," he said. "That's what our focus is. It's very important to me that we make the playoffs."

Even if the Patriots somehow win their final eight games, that still might not be good enough to make the playoffs.

Belichick is 71 and has spent almost 50 years coaching

in the NFL so he could sail off on a yacht and not look back when his time is up in New England. But if he wants to keep going and continue chasing Shula's record — Belichick is 17 wins away from first place — it's likely he'll get an opportunity.

Here are five teams that could hire Belichick next:

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

The Chargers (4-4) have underachieved in Brandon Staley's 2 1/2 seasons. They reached the playoffs last season only to waste a 27-0 lead in a loss to Jacksonville. Unless Staley wins a playoff game this season, a change could happen. Belichick would get a franchise quarterback in Justin Herbert and he'd sell tickets in a stadium that's usually filled with fans from opposing teams.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

Todd Bowles won a division title last season but is 11-15 since replacing Bruce Arians so he could be out if the Buccaneers (3-5) don't find a way to win the mediocre NFC South. Bringing Brady to the Sunshine State worked out well for the Buccaneers, who won a Super Bowl in No. 12's first season in 2020. Bucs general manager Jason Licht had two stints in the front office under



New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick watches from the sidelines in the second half of an NFL football game against the Washington Commanders, Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023, in Foxborough, Mass.

Associated Press

Belichick so they have a relationship. Tampa's ownership had success with a big-name hire previously when the team traded for Jon Gruden, who led the Buccaneers to the franchise's first Super Bowl title in 2002.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

The Commanders are 4-5 and Ron Rivera hasn't had a winning record in Washington though he won a division title at 7-9 in 2020. It seems inevitable the new ownership group will want to hire their own guy. Hiring Belichick would win over a fan base that suffered through Daniel Snyder's tenure. The Commanders have talented players on defense and young quarterback Sam Howell has potential so they could be an attractive destination for Belichick.

CHICAGO BEARS

Matt Eberflus is 6-21 and

the Bears (3-7) could be onto their sixth coach since 2012. They might end with two picks in the top five and have a decision to make on quarterback Justin Fields. Belichick's recent track record in the draft doesn't help his case but he would bring instant credibility to an organization that's enjoyed one winning season since 2013.

DALLAS COWBOYS

Mike McCarthy might have to reach the Super Bowl to stay in Dallas. The Cowboys (5-3) have plenty of talent but haven't had playoff success. Jerry Jones might run out of patience if the Cowboys fail to reach the NFC title game for the 28th straight year. Jones' ego may not handle giving Belichick control but he once hired Bill Parcells so it's not unrealistic. □

Oleksandr Usyk will be sure of Tyson Fury fight when he hears 'the sound of a bell'

VALENCIA, Spain (AP) —

The heavyweight title fight between Oleksandr Usyk and Tyson Fury now appears likely to be held in February.

Although Usyk isn't convinced.

"I'm not 100% sure. I will be sure when I'm the ring," Usyk said. "I will stand in one corner, Tyson Fury will stand in the opposite corner, between us a referee in a white shirt, and only when I hear the sound of a bell — that's when I'll understand that yes, the game is on."

The Ukrainian has his doubts because the fight had



Ukrainian heavyweight boxing champion Oleksandr Usyk, poses for a photo during an interview with The Associated Press, in Valencia, Spain, Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023.

Associated Press

been planned for Dec. 23 in Saudi Arabia. That was before Fury got knocked

down and nearly defeated by Francis Ngannou, an MMA fighter making his

boxing debut.

Fury's British promoter, Frank Warren, then called the December date "unlikely" for the first bout this century to unify all of the major heavyweight boxing titles.

Usyk holds the IBF, WBA and WBO belts and Fury has the WBC version of the heavyweight title.

The last fight to crown an undisputed heavyweight champion was in 1999, when Lennox Lewis beat Evander Holyfield.

"I want this to work out, I want this fight to happen," the 36-year-old Usyk said

from his training camp in Valencia. "The fact that it is postponed is no problem to me. I'm satisfied."

Usyk, whose country was invaded by Russia in February 2022, said he's "not motivated by money."

"I don't care about material things. I care for the path I follow," he said.

Usyk (21-0) is coming off a defense against Daniel Dubois in Poland in August. The Ukrainian won his heavyweight titles off Anthony Joshua in 2021 and defended them in a rematch in Saudi Arabia the following year. □ Earlier talks for a

Weekly SPECIALS



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| <p>WAS \$6.22</p> <p>\$3.14</p> <p>Per KG</p> <p>Apple HoneyCrisp</p> | <p>WAS \$10.83</p> <p>\$7.91</p> <p>Clamshell</p> <p>Grapes Red Seedless 2lb</p> | <p>WAS \$18.85</p> <p>\$16.85</p> <p>Per KG</p> <p>Angus Cuts small</p> | <p>WAS \$21.42</p> <p>\$19.42</p> <p>Per KG</p> <p>Angus Chuck Roll/Riblappen</p> |
| <p>WAS \$15.42</p> <p>\$13.71</p> <p>Per KG</p> <p>Angus Hachee Stewbeef</p> | <p>WAS \$9.11</p> <p>\$5.69</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Peppers Rainbow</p> | <p>WAS \$5.14</p> <p>\$4.54</p> <p>Per BAG</p> <p>Potato Yellow Yukon 5lbs</p> | <p>WAS \$2.45</p> <p>\$1.99</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Lettuce Iceberg Wrapped</p> |
| <p>WAS \$5.31</p> <p>\$3.59</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Thai Kitchen Lite Coconut Milk 400ml</p> | | | |
| <p>DIARY/FROZEN</p> <p>WAS \$7.14</p> <p>\$5.37</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Califia Almond Milk GF 48oz</p> <p>WAS \$5.11</p> <p>\$3.88</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Melkan Gouda Jong 48- 190gr</p> | <p>HBC/GM</p> <p>éxito</p> <p>\$0.97</p> <p>Each</p> <p>ANPM Plus Absorbent Cotton 256</p> <p>éxito</p> <p>\$1.59</p> <p>Each</p> <p>TLD Industrial Waste Bag 65x100 100</p> | <p>DELI/BAKERY</p> <p>WAS \$1.59</p> <p>\$1.31</p> <p>100 GR</p> <p>Provolone Cheese</p> <p>WAS \$1.42</p> <p>\$1.14</p> <p>100 GR</p> <p>Cured Honey Ham</p> | |
| <p>DRY FOOD</p> | | | |
| <p>éxito</p> <p>\$3.02</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Toeq Light Mustard Vinaigrette 225g</p> | <p>éxito</p> <p>\$1.42</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Frescampo Capers in Vinegar 125g</p> | <p>WAS \$5.31</p> <p>\$4.57</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Maggi Sauce Aroma 960gr 800ml</p> | <p>WAS \$3.37</p> <p>\$2.85</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Pringles Salt & Vinegar 5.5oz</p> |
| | | <p>WAS \$3.34</p> <p>\$2.85</p> <p>Each</p> <p>Kraft BBQ Sauce Original 18oz</p> | |

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